Using Paint Tools in Pre-K-1 Classrooms
by Lorrie Jackson

WHY A TECHTORIAL?

What will I learn today?
You will learn how to use Paint tools to enhance the development of literacy skills in young children.

To what hardware and/or software does the techtorial apply?
You will need Microsoft Windows to complete this techtorial. If you are using Macintosh computers, you can do the activity -- with minor adjustments -- using Appleworks or a similar program.

Which National Educational Technology Standards for Teachers does the techtorial address?
The techtorial will help teachers accomplish standard IVa in particular.

The International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) has developed a set of National Educational Technology Standards for Teachers. Standards or Performance Indicators are included for each techtorial to help teachers and administrators improve technology proficiency. For a complete description of the standards indicated, go to NETS for Teachers.

USING COMPUTERS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD CLASSROOMS

Using technology with pre-K-1 children can provide an interesting challenge to teachers. The kids' short attention spans, emerging literacy skills, and developing motor skills make using computers difficult. Drawing programs, such as Microsoft Paint, can help students improve eye-hand coordination and build on their literacy skills with activities that are short and engaging.

This tutorial provides step-by-step directions for two early childhood activities using Paint tools.

Next: An engaging activity!

PAINT A STORY ENDING

Objective: Students will use Paint tools to create their own story ending.

Before class begins:
- Locate an early childhood fiction book that ends with a cliffhanger or one that has an ending that is not resolved until the last page.
- To open the Windows Paint program, click Start>All Programs (or Programs)>Accessories>Paint.

Opening activity:
- Read aloud to students the book you have selected. Do *not* read the last page.
- Discuss with students possible endings to the story.
- Explain to students that they will create their own ending by painting it on the computer.

Paint the ending:
- Introduce the Paint program to students. Help them locate the paintbrush, color palette, paint can, and eraser. Show them how to select colors and how to erase mistakes.
- Explain to students that they should use the mouse to control the paintbrush, just as they would use their hands to paint with a real paintbrush.
- Walk around and help those who need it. (Some children might need help reviewing the story; others will need help using the Paint tools.)
- When children finish painting, explain that they can add text by clicking the "A" icon. Have children type their names, the date, and (depending on individual literacy skills) a word or sentence explaining the picture.
- Print each picture and have students share their pictures with classmates! (Before printing, go to File>Page Setup and choose *Fit to 1 by 1 page*.)

Next: A book of their own!

CREATE A STORY BOOK

Objective: Students will use Paint tools to create their own story ending.

Before class begins:
- Select a picture book with short sentences and characters and settings that are fun and easy to draw.
- Type each sentence in the book in a larger font (26 point is good). Leave a single space above and below each sentence.
- Print the sentences and cut them into individual strips; each piece of paper should have one sentence on it.
- Open Microsoft Paint and select the "A" icon.

Type the sentences:
- Provide each student with a strip containing one sentence.
- Have each student type his or her sentence. (They do *not* need to be able to read the sentence.)
- Ask each student to type his or her name beneath the sentence.

Paint the sentence:
- Read each student's sentence aloud.
- Have each student paint a picture showing what his or her sentence says.

Make the book:
- Print each student's page and staple the pages together in the correct order.
- Read aloud the story the children have painted.
- You may want to read aloud the original book as well and compare the subject matter and details of the pictures.

Students love this assignment because they feel as though they've actually written the story, even if they are unable to actually read a word of it!

Next: Learn more!

TELL ME MORE!

Where can I find more computer activities for early childhood?
For dozens of activities, resources, and ideas for using computers in the early childhood classroom, visit
Internet4Classrooms's Kindergarten+.